

Feb. 26 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

chasers confirm that they will be used to carry out debt-for-equity, debt-for-development, or debt-for-nature swaps in eligible countries.

We believe that these investment, debt, and environmental measures will provide significant support to the efforts of Latin America and the Caribbean to build strong economies.

The leaders of these countries have welcomed the Initiative and widely recognize it as the most significant opportunity—and challenge—in inter-American relations in recent years. These are the leaders who are facing difficult choices in reforming their economies and, in the process, turning the tide away from economic decline and environmental degradation.

Their efforts are not merely of theoretical

importance to us in the United States. We have not gone untouched by the economic crisis faced by Latin America and the Caribbean over the last decade. As countries in the region cut imports, postponed investment, and struggled to service their foreign debt, we too were affected. We lost trade, markets, and opportunities.

Enactment of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Act of 1991 will permit the United States to support the efforts of Latin American and Caribbean leaders, increasing the prospects for economic growth and prosperity throughout the hemisphere.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
February 26, 1991.

Remarks to the Conference on Marketing Economics and Management Training for Eastern Europe

February 27, 1991

Thank you very much. Nice to see all of you. Please be seated, and welcome, all. I'm very pleased to be here in my role as what's billed as a cameo appearance, in and out—[*laughter*—and let you get on with the important work before you. But I want to welcome all of you to the White House. Thank you for your participation.

A number have come from very far away: Vice President Pregl of Yugoslavia; the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Pirinski; and Ministers from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

Among so many others here today, George Varga from Hungary and Haile Aguilar from Poland, Drew Lewis—where's Drew? I don't see him. Among others who are not here is Drew Lewis. [*Laughter*] But let me just say this: His leadership at the Citizens Democracy Corps has been just fantastic. And I was hoping he'd be here so I could single him out. He's for lunch—okay. And of course, Dave Gergen, who I understand is ably moderating all of this. I salute Secretaries Robson and Eagleburger, too.

Yesterday I was on the phone for a long time with Vaclav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia. And I made clear to him that, though the Gulf obviously is dominating the news coverage and claiming a lot of our time, I have not lost interest, nor has anyone in our government—as Secretaries Eagleburger and Robson can attest to—we have not lost interest in what's going on in Eastern Europe. All our people here are experts. Bruce Gelb knows that; Mike Roskens knows. And we are delighted that this is going forward, this conference and these discussions.

Historic events in Central and Eastern Europe—I called it the Revolution of '89—and its aftermath have indeed inspired us all. These countries are committed to free societies and free market economies. And we have been strong supporters of economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe through major bilateral commitments and supportive stabilization programs, enterprise funds for the private sectors of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and improved trade and investment relations.

And I'd say from talking to our experts that the results are encouraging. Economic reforms are largely on track despite some very difficult challenges, despite some outside effects on these economies.

I think back to a conversation that I had again with President Havel about the effect that that early oil increase, the spike in oil prices as a result of the war, had on his economy. And then I heard from other Eastern European leaders about the adverse effect that it had on their economies. So, there have been some abnormal challenges as these market economies begin to function.

I think that our efforts and those of many in this room have helped bring positive change. And I know that the Western European countries are very much together in the determination that the positive change continue. But Central and Eastern Europeans cry out for one thing that our Federal Government alone certainly cannot offer, and that is private investment and practical free market expertise and involvement from Americans.

I've stressed throughout my administration that excellence in education is a key element of sound growth. And educated, well-trained labor forces are important for mature economies, and they're absolutely crucial for economies in transition. And a well-informed populace lends support for reform. Many of you, as I indicated earlier, are already engaged in Central and Eastern Europe. With the great human potential and commitment to market economic reform, these economies of Central and Eastern Europe are seeking to attract trade and investment. And I just hope that that trend will continue.

You have the ability to provide the world's best training in management and market economies. And America know-how really does run the gamut from higher education to the small-scale entrepreneurship. Universities, businesses, foundations, government all have something to contribute. I think that there is an important link between economic and political freedom. Education, free markets, and the prosperity they bring will reinforce political pluralism in these countries.

The challenges that these countries face

as they fundamentally restructure their economies are enormous. Our administration will continue its strong support and assistance for their vital and historic efforts.

I just really wanted to come over to thank all of you. I might say, knowing of the interest that everyone has in the business at hand in the Gulf, that when I got to the office this morning the news continues to be very, very good, very, very heartening. I know that all Americans took great joy in the beginning of the liberation of Kuwait City. But the liberation of Kuwait, the country, is almost complete. I hope that those from overseas will explain this note of personal pride when I say I have never been more proud in my life of anybody than I am of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. They have served with great distinction, enormous motivation from the very beginning. And I think what they have done to contribute to this wave of patriotism and demonstration to others that our country is united is absolutely superb and will go down in history.

Having said all that, we're going to concentrate on ending that thing, ending it right, and then moving forward and staying with these enormous challenges that these countries face. We can be helpful there. Our relationship with the Soviet Union has a lot to do with how a lot of this goes forward, and I'm determined to see that that stays on a good plane. So, you caught me on an upbeat day—particularly upbeat, with the visit of these foreign—[*applause*]

Note: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Zivko Pregl, Vice President of the Yugoslav Federal Executive Council; Georgi Pirinski, Member of the Bulgarian Grand National Assembly; Zdenko Pirek, Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Hungarian Coordination Committee for Foreign Assistance; Ferenc Madl, Hungarian Minister Without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister; Polish Minister Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Coordinator of Foreign Assistance to Poland and Plenipotentiary for Europe; Eugen Dijmarescu, Romanian Minister of State for Economic

Feb. 27 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

Orientation; George Varga, president and chief executive officer of Tungsram Co., Ltd., Hungary; Haile Aguilar, general manager of the Warsaw Marriott Hotel; Drew Lewis, chairman of the board of the Citizens Democracy Corps; David S. Gergen, editor-at-large for U.S. News & World Report; Dep-

uty Secretary of the Treasury John E. Robson; Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger; President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia; Bruce S. Gelb, Director of the U.S. Information Agency; and Ronald W. Roskens, Administrator of the Agency for International Development.

Remarks at a Meeting of the American Society of Association Executives

February 27, 1991

Thank you very, very much. And what a wonderful reception. And I interpret that, I think properly, the same way I interpreted the applause at the State of the Union message: as strong support for those men and women that are serving our country overseas. And now the war is almost over, and I think we owe them a vote of thanks, and I think I heard it right now. So, thank you, Bill, and I'm just delighted to be here.

I want to shift and talk about domestic matters. And Bill, I couldn't help but glance at this marvelous quilt coming in here, and I do think that we owe you and all the others in the association a vote of thanks for following through and, indeed, being Points of Light.

I want to salute our Attorney General who is with us today; our two able Secretaries so concerned also about what we're talking about today, Secretaries Kemp and Sullivan; Ted Sanders, who is doing a superb job as our Acting Secretary at Education; and, of course, my old friend, a man so well-known to all of you, Bob Woodson of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. You know, it's hard to believe that a year has passed since the challenge Bill mentioned, since I challenged the members of ASAE to channel the tremendous energy of this organization and transform a nation through community service. And what a terrific job you've done.

Looking around the room today, peeking before I came in here, I see so many familiar faces, so many people that are making a difference in the lives of others. Every

man and woman here believes in the power of the individual and is bolstered by the conviction that America is indeed a land of opportunity. For more than 200 years, America has been the home of free markets and free people. And there is no question: Opportunity in America is the envy of the entire world.

The story of America has been the story of opportunity. Throughout our history, we've pioneered the frontiers of liberty for all humanity. Our Founding Fathers created perhaps the most simple yet profound document in modern history: our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Abraham Lincoln broke forever the chains of human slavery. The suffrage movement made the promise of democracy a reality for women. The founders of our public schools unleashed our national potential through universal education. And by their struggle for equal rights, the leaders of the civil rights movement helped bring dignity to the oppressed and disenfranchised. The story of opportunity in America is the story of Thomas Paine and Frederick Douglass, Clara Barton, the Wright brothers, Rosa Parks.

But it doesn't end there, with these heroes from our past. There are the new American heroes of today, many of them in this room. And they, too, are inspired by pride, integrity, faith in the dignity of man, and courage, yes, courage to overcome the odds. It's called leadership by example, and it's made America the world's great beacon of freedom.